

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Patrick McHenry, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives sent the letter below to President Obama's nominee for Secretary of Commerce.

In anticipation of former Washington Governor Gary Locke's confirmation hearing, Congressman McHenry asks, "Do you intend to comply with the partisan ambitions of the President or to fulfill your constitutional obligation as Secretary of Commerce and oversee a fair and accurate 2010 Decennial Census?"

February 26, 2009

Governor Gary Locke

c/o: The White House

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Governor Locke,

Management of the 2010 Decennial Census will be an important responsibility for the next Secretary of Commerce. Last year, seven former Directors of the U.S. Census Bureau, appointed by Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush wrote, "it is vitally important that the American public have confidence that the census results have been produced by an independent, non-partisan, apolitical, and scientific Census Bureau."

As the Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and

National Archives, I am interested to know your view on the Obama Administration's plan to circumvent the authority of the Secretary of Commerce and place the traditionally non-partisan census under White House influence. Senator Judd Gregg, in a letter withdrawing his name from consideration for Secretary of Commerce, cited his refusal to compromise on this matter. Do you intend to comply with the partisan ambitions of the President or to fulfill your constitutional obligation as Secretary of Commerce and oversee a fair and accurate 2010 Decennial Census?

It is the responsibility of the Census Bureau to physically count every person in the United States. However, there are partisans who advocate statistical "adjustment" or extrapolation over precise counting. This method is rightly outlawed by the 1980 Census Act, in part because it inherently compromises the integrity of census data and makes it vulnerable to political manipulation. Will it be your objective to count every person or to employ statistical adjustment?

As you look forward to your confirmation hearing, I urge you to consider these vital concerns regarding the operation of the Census Bureau and its conduct of the census. My colleagues and I, in the House of Representatives, stand willing and ready to work with you to provide a full, accurate, and apolitical 2010 Decennial Census count.

Regards,

Congressman Patrick McHenry

Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Information Policy,

Census, and National Archives

CC: Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV, Chairman, Senate Committee on

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on

Commerce, Science, and Transportation